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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

AL 46

February 28, 1977

The Honorable
Cyrus R. Vance
Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, DC

ARGENTINA PROJECTS 200000040
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/PS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
(X) Release () Exempt () Deny
Exemption(s):
Declassify: () In Part () In Full
() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to
Date Declassify on Reason

Dear Mr. Secretary:

At the outset, let me express my hope that your recent trip to the Middle East has provided some support for an expectation of progress in that key region. Also, I want to emphasize, as I did recently in the Senate, my pleasure at the initial statements and actions that you and the President have made on the importance of human rights considerations in the formulation and implementation of our foreign policy. You will have my full support for this effort. I was particularly pleased to see the initial steps taken with regard to the military assistance program.

Following up particularly your statement with regard to Argentina and the violation of human rights there that justified the proposed reduction in military assistance, I would like to suggest consideration of additional steps with regard to that country.

A brief history is that as Chairman of the Senate Refugee Subcommittee, I strongly supported the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees in his efforts to assure the protection of foreign political refugees in Chile, Argentina and Uruguay. We also have worked closely with the International Red Cross in each of those countries along with other human rights organizations.

After lengthy delay, our pressure on the Administration ultimately produced, in 1975, a special parole program in Chile and in Argentina and Peru for political refugees from Chile, later extended to other refugees in Argentina.

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It did not include Argentine nationals. Given the condition of human rights in Argentina, as evidenced by your own actions, I would hope that you would consider extending the current program to include Argentine nationals in Argentina.

In further support of the serious nature of the situation in Argentina, I am enclosing the attached letter to me from the Argentine Commission for Human Rights, signed by Olga Talamante, a US citizen who herself was imprisoned and tortured in Argentina. I am also including a list of individuals who appear to be without political terrorist backgrounds who remained detained. I also would like to stress the fact that some ex-parliamentarians, such as former Senator Solari Irigoyen, also are detained. A lawyer who was arrested with Dr. Solaria Irigoyen, Dr. Mario Abel Amaya, died in prison. Both had been among the few attorneys willing to defend political prisoners. Hopefully, we also might support the Mexican government in its efforts to obtain Argentine government permission for former President Campora to leave the Mexican Embassy, where he sought refuge, to obtain asylum in Mexico.

I believe, as you expressed, that the situation in Argentina justifies continuing US concern and reiteration of the importance of human rights considerations in our bilateral relationship. In addition to requesting of the Argentina government their collaboration with a parole program, let me suggest that the currently available, but not released, funding for FY '77 of some \$48 million in military sales assistance for Argentina might well be withheld on human rights grounds. There might appear to be a conflict if on the one hand, the new Administration reduced the level of planned assistance for next year, but released three times that amount a few weeks later --- without a very significant reversal of the human rights situation.

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Similarly, I would hope that an effort would be made to insure that the object of reducing our military support to Argentina will not be undercut by any sudden spurt of commercial arms sales, which require license approval.

Looking forward to your assistance in this matter.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ed Kennedy", written in a cursive style.

Edward M. Kennedy